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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2213
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 9521
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 5443
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 4824
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2245
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 1452
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2382
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2312
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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SUBJECT: KENYA ELECTIONS: GENDER, RELIGION & THE ELECTORATE

REF: A. ANDRE/AF-E EMAIL DATED 07SEP07

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 628

[1](#)C. NAIROBI 3581

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Analysis of raw voter registration data reveals the gender and approximate religious composition of the electorate, which differs somewhat from that of the general population. Women account for 47 percent of registered voters. Nairobi has the lowest share of women voters at only 38 percent. Muslims make up the majority of registered voters in 25 out of 210 parliamentary constituencies (accounting for six percent of the total electorate). The remainder have Christian majorities. Despite calls from some Muslim clerics for the community to vote against Kibaki, we see no sign that Kenyan Muslims will vote as a united bloc. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The U.S. Mission obtained raw voter registration data from the Electoral Commission of Kenya as of 28 May 2007 (Ref A). Our analysis of the data (Ref A) provides the following gender & religious portrait of the Kenyan electorate. Ref B reviewed politics and religious identity in Kenya. Ref C examined the ethnic composition of the electorate.

Gender and the Kenyan Electorate

[1](#)3. (SBU) A review of registered voter data as of 28 May 2007 indicates that women make up 47 percent of the national electorate. They make up only 38 percent of Nairobi's electorate and 41 percent of the electorate in "mixed" constituencies (that is, constituencies where no single ethnic group predominates). Mixed constituencies are the most vulnerable to political violence, which may account for the relatively low number of registered women voters. Five of Nairobi's eight constituencies are mixed. Certain constituencies in Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces are notorious for the "importation" of voters from outside the constituencies to benefit a free spending candidate. The registered voter data reveals that these constituencies have significantly greater disparities in the number of male and female voters than do surrounding constituencies. Typically, "imported" voters are men trucked in en masse to register in the constituency and then brought back a couple days prior to the election itself.

Religion and the Electorate

¶4. (SBU) Kenya's religious demography is roughly 80 percent Christian, 10 percent Muslim and 10 percent other (ref B). Twenty-five of Kenya's 210 constituencies (12 percent) are predominately Muslim. The remainder are predominately Christian. These 25 Muslim-majority constituencies account for about six percent of all registered voters. Distribution of Muslim-majority constituencies is as follows: Coast province: nine out of 21; Northeastern Province (ethnic Somali): 12 out of 12; Eastern Province: four out of 36 (northern districts of the province, predominately, Borana/Oromo).

¶5. (SBU) Some churches and a few Muslim leaders have urged their religious communities to support specific candidates. However, the largest and most authoritative Christian and Muslim organizations (the National Council of Churches of Kenya, the Catholic Episcopal Conference and the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims) have simply urged their members to vote their conscience. Given the great ethnic, cultural and regional diversity of Kenya's Muslim community, Muslims will not vote as a single bloc, despite some vocal leaders calling for opposition to a second Kibaki term in office.

Comment: Ethnicity Trumps Other Considerations...Usually

¶6. (SBU) When voting for President and Member of Parliament, most Kenyan voters will consider ethnicity first. Gender and religion generally come into play only when rival candidates and the parties they represent are identified with the same

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ethnic interests. In constituencies where neither Christianity nor Islam have a strong majority (one in Nairobi, one in Eastern Province and two in Coast Province), religious solidarity may become an electoral factor.
RANNEBERGER